

REMARKS

Amendments to the Claims

Upon entry of the present amendments, claims 4-7, 10, 16-19, and 22 are pending. Claims 1-3, 8, 9, 11, 13-15, 20, 21, 23, and 25 are cancelled without any intention to abandon any subject matter of these claims, but with the intention that claims of the same, lesser, or greater scope may be pursued in a later application. The present amendment does not introduce new matter.

Claims 4 and 5 are amended to change their dependencies from claim 3 to claim 10 in view of the cancellation of claim 3. Claims 16-19 are amended to change their dependencies from claim 15 to claim 22 in view of the cancellation of claim 15.

Under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b), amendments that cancel claims or that comply with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office action or that present rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal may be admitted after a final rejection. Under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(c), amendments touching the merits of the application may be admitted after final rejection may be admitted upon a showing of good and sufficient reasons why they are necessary and were not earlier presented.

The cancellation of claims moots the outstanding rejections against these claims. Additionally, the changing of claim dependencies does not broaden the scope of these claims, since the substance of claim 3 was previously incorporated into claim 10, while the substance of claim 15 similarly was incorporated into claim 22. These amendments were not presented early because, of course, amendment and argument of the now-cancelled base claims was ongoing until now.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments are in full compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 and should accordingly be admitted.

Each of the points raised in the Office Action is addressed below, under an appropriate sub-heading.

APPLICANTS: J. Rapuano *et al.*
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Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-9, 11, 13-21, 23 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a plurality of cited references.

Of these claims, claims 1-3, 8, 9, 11, 13-15, 20, 21, 23, and 25 are cancelled, herein, thereby obviating the rejection of those claims. Remaining among the claims that were rejected are claims 4-7 and 16-19. The dependency (or chain of dependency) of each of these claims has been amended so that each now depends directly or indirectly from claim 10 or claim 22, both of which were allowed in the most-recent Office action.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that each of claims 4-7 and 16-19 is allowable, *inter alia*, for the same reasons that claims 10 and 22 were allowed.

Allowance of Claims

As noted, above, claims 10 and 22 were allowed. These allowed claims have not been amended and, therefore, remain allowable.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 4-7, 10, 16-19, and 22 are in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding these amendments and remarks, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert J. Sayre, Reg. No. 42,124
Attorney for Applicants
MINTZ, LEVIN, COHN, FERRIS,
GLOVSKY and POPEO, P.C.
Address all written correspondence to
Customer No. 30623
Tel: (617) 542-6000
Fax: (617) 542-2241